

**WEST ST. PAUL PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**5:30 PM, Tuesday, June 14, 2022**  
**West St. Paul Council Chambers**

**Park & Rec. Members Present:** Chair Dave Lynch, Luke Abrahamson, Pat Armon, Bonnie Bellows, Kelly Gibbons, Teresa Smock, Emily Vergin

**Absent:** Sara Blair, Kelly Hagler

**Non-Voting Members Present:** Council Liaison Wendy Berry, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Dave Schletty, Recording Secretary Sharon Hatfield

- 1. Roll Call**
- 2. Adopt Minutes**

Chair Lynch called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. The May 10, 2022 minutes were approved by the Committee.

- 3. New Business**

- a. Park Naming Policy**

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Schletty talked about the new policy for naming and renaming parks. There is interest in formally naming two parks: the “Art Park” and the playground area and park around the West St. Paul pool. Schletty investigated and there is no formal naming policy for the parks currently. Schletty formed a policy, and Council adopted it at the end of February. The Committee would facilitate the naming of the parks, (the picking of potential names) and then solicit public feedback. The names would then be presented to Council for final approval.

Lynch commented that the naming process should not be short; the City should solicit and get quality names. Member Vergin suggested using social media and a Google form to survey residents for suggestions. Clpn. Berry added that the naming is not “super urgent.” Member Armon asked about gifts to the City and naming parks and if the gift would need to be cash. Schletty said that the gift did not need to be cash; it could also be land. Bellows commented that it would be nice to have the names researched. It would avoid surprises. Member Smock suggested forming a subcommittee for the task. Schletty said a subcommittee could be formed, or the full committee could take on the task. He likes the idea of an on-line form with a list of names already chosen and having an “Other” option.

Vergin suggested having residents vote for names at the Environmental Fair. Residents could vote for names with colored stickers. This would provide Council with a graphic representation of name preference. It would be an easy way to get children involved as well. Vergin, Lynch and Berry volunteered for the park naming subcommittee.

- b. Halloween Events Reimagined**

Schletty reported that Sam Murphy, Recreation Supervisor, would like to try something different this year. She would like to promote some more community building events for the Halloween celebration. She suggested doing something different and asked for ideas. Murphy called her idea, the “Spooky Season Sampler.”

Events included:

- Coloring Contest
- Candy Corn crafts, (crafts inspired by candy corn), done in conjunction with Outrageous Art
- Candy-making class- using a local business like Regina's Candy
- Hayride pull and hot cider event on a park trail
- Creepy Cocktail creations for the adults/collaboration with Foodsmith

Lynch asked about Dodge's event. Schletty does not know if Dodge is having a Halloween event. They have not held the event during the Covid pandemic. Smock suggested a scary haunted hayride or trail. Vergin suggested a Movie in the Park. Schletty suggested doing the movie in the Dome; the movie equipment freezes in very cold weather. Gibbons remarked that at the last Halloween event, even though it was very cold, many children came to the event and there were a lot of happy faces. Smock said if the City had events in Harmon Park on Saturdays, many children playing soccer on Matson Field would participate.

Berry likes the idea of more stuff. Armon said that Anoka is the Halloween capital of the world. The City could get ideas from them. The City could hold a separate kid and adult costume parade event. Gibbons like the ideas of the haunted trails and the truck pulls. Armon asked if there could be two trails for different ages. Schletty said that the details of the event(s) would be finalized for the fall City newsletter's deadline in early July. Vergin voiced support for Murphy's ideas.

#### **4. Old Business**

##### **a. Park Project Wish List**

Smock said there is a request to plant trees by the basketball court in Emerson Park. The basketball court is in the sun all day and is incredibly hot. Smock suggested planting the trees between the court and the parking lot area. Schletty said planting trees there would help prevent people from parking on the grass. Lynch said a resident would like a rebound wall installed at the longer end of the pickleball court. Armon suggested having a hammock grove. Schletty said that once Marthaler Park is cleared, a place for the hammocks could be found among the mature trees. Vergin talked about having stops along the park trails with suggested activities like jumping jacks or a breathing exercise. It was discussed on a post for the Bike/Ped Plan. Vergin suggested small installations around the park that are informative about the wildlife. Bellows suggested benches. Older people on the trails need a place to stop and rest. Lynch suggested a historical placard with biography of the person for whom the park is named. Schletty said that this is a "pet project" of Kevin Hendricks. Hendricks is working with the County on the project. Lynch mentioned there was a person interested in a broomball league. Schletty said that the City Manager would like the Committee to work on a new Parks Master Plan focusing on all of the other parks (not the main ones, like Marthaler, Harmon and the Sports Complex.) Gibbons asked about having a music or amphitheater venue. Schletty said that the City is now working with Hy-Vee to find a developer who will follow the City's vision for a public/performance space venue. It was discussed at last night's EDA session. It is a high priority for Council.

##### **b. Continued Discussion of Sub-committee Establishment**

Members Gibbons and Abrahamson volunteered for the Skate Park subcommittee.

Members Gibbons and Vergin volunteered for the Public Art Committee.

The collaboration with Environmental Committee may be done in a joint work session. Outside people could be brought into the subcommittees as well.

## 5. Other

### a. Council Updates

- i. **Mud Lake**-Berry and Clpn. Eng-Sarne met some residents from Mud Lake. Mud Lake has a lot of [plant] growth and the DNR has limited what the City can do to treat the lake. Lynch has worked to pull buckthorn and reestablish the trail around Mud Lake.
- ii. **Basketball courts**- Some basketball courts have been restored in the parks; they only have one hoop; Berry would like the Committee to discuss bringing back the second basketball hoop to the courts. Council would like to investigate the noise levels of the courts currently.
- iii. **Hy-Vee location**- Berry would like more ideas for the former Hy-Vee location. 1

Lynch added that many residents have helped to restore the trail around Mud Lake. He echoed Berry urging Committee Members to visit the lake/park. Berry said that [a few] Mud Lake residents have asked for a wooded, more sustainable trail around the lake. There are many lily pads in the lake; they hinder the ability to canoe around the lake. Armon talked about Lily Lake; it has similar issues. Schletty said that it would be a private property issue. The City has been doing some monitoring over the years with different wetlands. Schletty said that Wetland Health Evaluation Program (WHEP) has looked at Lily Lake's health in the past.

### b. Staff Updates

- i. **Explore West St. Paul Days**- The planning for the event is moving ahead. People are registering for the parade event. City staff went door knocking on Robert Street for sponsorship. Smock suggested contacting PTA associations for sponsorship. Other groups to contact were football teams and dance teams. Schletty said that the art contest for the event might be cancelled. The timeline may be too short for artists to submit their entries. There will still be a community bike event and a garage sale.
- ii. **River to River Trail**-The City is continuing work on the trail. Two bench nodes have been added to the trail. In Garlough Park, near the first tee, a concrete pad and a bench have been installed. A bike rack with a repair station will follow. A dozen trees have been planted in Garlough Park to separate the playground from the trail. A hammock grove will eventually be constructed in this area. The trail construction in the former golf course site is scheduled to start this summer and end next year.
- iii. **Summer Programs**- Programs "kicked off" this week. The Two Sams have been very busy moving everything very smoothly. Most summer temporary positions were filled. The department has been trying alternative programming. There is now an adult beanbag tournament and adult pickleball lessons. Lynch wanted the Committee to talk about "Folks on Spokes." Participants do not need to register for this community bike ride. There are set days/times and routes. It is an average pace bike ride of about 7-15 miles with a stop in the middle.

People can chat as they bike. The intent is for the City to start the group and for the participants to take over later. Kids can come along. However, they need to be accompanied by an adult if they are under 18 years old.

- iv. **\$300, 000 DNR Grant**-The City received a grant of \$300,000 for work on Marthaler Park.
- v. **Committee Objectives**- Schletty said that he would like to lay out clear objectives for the Committee for the next 2-3 years. The objectives need to align with the Strategic Plan and Council direction. It may be done in conjunction with the Environmental Committee.
- c. **Environmental Committee**-Lynch talked about the discussion at the last Environmental Committee meeting. The committee talked about the need to decrease the use of road salt to decrease the amount of pollution going into rivers ponds lakes and streams. They also talked about the parkland being planned into the former golf course site. Donna Lindberg of the Marthaler Neighbors group is holding the first cleanup event at Marthaler Park this Saturday, 9-11 am. Armon suggested having West St. Paul t-shirts made up for Committee Members and other volunteers.

6. **Citizen Comments**-NA

7. **Adjournment**-The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 pm.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Sharon G. Hatfield**